Youngsters in specially organized training and their spare time life

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**Background**

Youngsters with mental and functional handicaps are challenged in their possibility to have a fulfilled life included spare time activities. This dilemma lead to a research topic *How can youngster’s spare time be seen as a health promotion in order to be able to master an independent youth?*

**Method**

The research has a phenomenological approach. The target group includes pupils (our primary informants), teachers, parents and heads of two schools with specially organized training. As secondary informant groups voluntary organizations and sports clubs are involved. The theoretical approach is based on Habermas’ understanding of the connection between the system and the public sphere and Kajandis of quality of life. In this understanding the research has focused on the support from the system to have a spare time life.

**Results**

We see a gap between systematically support to have a work life and lack of support to enable fulfill the spare time. The youngsters are despite of their social and relational disabilities challenged in their possibility to organize connections. In school they are supported in their relationships, but there isn’t systematical support for these activities in the spare time. The priority is on connection to the labor market.

At the end of school, the system continues supporting the youngster’s connection to the labor market. This connection is important for their identity and understanding of being a citizen. This focus gives only an ‘Employee Citizenship’. There isn’t automatically the same support in participation in the public sphere. Therefor their families are essential in the youngster’s possibility to have an active spare time with friends and activities.

**Conclusions**

The single focus in ‘Employee Citizenship’ is a problem. Participation needs as well a focus on ‘Co-Citizens Companion-ship’. It is essential, that the system pay more attention to a participation in society that includes the spare time in the youngster’s public sphere.